

In the Claims:

1. (original) An electrical connector, comprising:

a terminal block having an electric wire receiving passageway that communicates with a spring receiving passageway;

a housing provided with a contact, the contact having a piercing member that extends into the electric wire receiving passageway for piercing a sheathing member of an electric wire received in the electric wire receiving passageway; and

a spring member arranged in the spring receiving passageway, the spring member having a contact retaining portion that urges the electric wire toward the piercing member.
2. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the terminal block moves between a pre-latched position and a locked position, the piercing member protrudes into the electric wire receiving passageway to pierce the electric wire in the locked position.
3. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 2, wherein the contact includes a support arm that presses the electric wire toward the spring member.
4. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the spring member is formed from a metal plate.
5. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the spring member has a fixed end press-fitted into the terminal block.

6. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the contact retaining portion has a slit for receiving the piercing member, the piercing member being arranged in the slit prior to receipt of the electric wire in the electric wire receiving passageway.
7. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 6, wherein the slit is chamfered for guiding the electric wire.
8. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the spring member has a fixed end and a free end and a bead is provided between the fixed end and the free end.
9. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the electric wire receiving passageway and the spring receiving passageway extend in a direction parallel to each other.
10. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the electric wire receiving passageway has an octagonal shape to limit deformation of the electric wire.
11. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the terminal block is formed from a transparent resin to check positioning of the electric wire.

12. (original) An electrical connector, comprising:

a terminal block having an electric wire receiving passageway that communicates with a spring receiving passageway, the terminal block moves between a pre-latched position and a locked position;

a housing provided with a contact, the contact having a piercing member for piercing a sheathing member of an electric wire and urging the electric wire toward the spring receiving passageway when the terminal block is moved to the locked position; and

a spring member arranged in the spring receiving passageway, the spring member having a contact retaining portion for urging the electric wire toward the piercing member as the piercing member urges the electric wire toward the contact retaining portion.

13. (original) The electrical connector of claim 12, wherein the piercing member orthogonally extends into the electric wire receiving passageway when the terminal block is in the locked position.

14. (currently amended) The electrical connector of claim 12, wherein the contact includes a support arm that presses the electric wire toward the ~~support~~ spring member.

15. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 12, wherein the spring member is formed from a metal plate.

16. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 12, wherein the spring member has a fixed end press-fitted into the terminal block.

17. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 12, wherein the contact retaining portion has a slit for receiving the piercing member, the piercing member being arranged in the slit prior to receipt of the electric wire in the electric wire receiving passageway.
18. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 17, wherein the slit is chamfered for guiding the electric wire.
19. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 12, wherein the spring member has a fixed end and a free end and a bead is provided between the fixed end and the free end.
20. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 12, wherein the electric wire receiving passageway and the spring receiving passageway extend in a direction parallel to each other.
21. (previously amended) The electrical connector of claim 12, wherein the electric wire receiving passageway has an octagonal shape to limit deformation of the electric wire.
22. (previously added) The electrical connector of claim 1, wherein the contact retaining portion has a slit for increasing flexibility of the contact retaining portion.
23. (previously added) The electrical connector of claim 22, wherein the slit is chamfered for guiding the electric wire.

24. (previously added) The electrical connector of claim 12, wherein the contact retaining portion has a slit for increasing flexibility of the contact retaining portion.

25. (previously added) The electrical connector of claim 24, wherein the slit is chamfered for guiding the electric wire.